

**Carnival of Flowers Sunday. September 23, 2018.**

*After the style of A.B. Paterson 'The Man from Snowy River'*

*Reflecting on Mark 9:30-37.*

There was movement in Capernaum, for the word had passed around

That the man from Nazareth had come to stay.

He was joined by his disciples and many people found,

That they wanted to hear more about 'The Way'.

All the interested stragglers from the country far and near

Had mustered there to listen to this man.

With all their ears a-tingling they gathered there to hear

The words of wisdom all about God's plan.

At times this Jesus' message was confusing and confronting,

When he spoke about his death which was to come.

It seemed to make no sense to say that he would soon be dying,

Why would that be if he is God's own Son?

So they listened and they questioned and they pondered words amazing

All the while considering what this meant.

For some the message was too much when death was turned to raising

And the usual pattern of life then death was bent.

In the middle of the teaching some of Jesus' closest mates

Began to think of their own rights and power.

They wondered who would be top dog, the ones with all the greatness,

The highest in the organisation's tower.

They missed the point, they lost the plot, they hadn't got a clue

About what his message really truly was.

They seemed to think God's blessing was something to accrue

Benefits and honours, bling and glitz and gloss.

To show his deeper meaning Jesus brought a little child

And placed her in the middle of the table.

Pointing to that little girl, Jesus then turned and smiled

Redirecting all their thoughts, as he was able.

It is not for power and glory and accumulated greatness

That God has called us all together here.

It's in humility, community and open-hearted gentleness

That meaning, life and purpose become clear.

Just like two thousand years ago today we here are gathered

With children as the focus of our day.

With flowers, photos, family and music we're surrounded

A time of joy and love to celebrate.

For the same love shared by Jesus as he spoke about his giving

Himself for everyone upon the cross,

Is seen in baptisms celebrated and the challenge to be living

Knowing we are close to God, and God to us.

In community we find the way to deeper, richer openness

And life attuned with how we have been made.

To welcome one, to welcome all, we sadly must confess,

Is not the way we always do behave.

So the challenge is before us to have our arms wide open

To welcome one another and embrace,

The different, strange and vulnerable, and all who may be hoping

To find a home, here within this place.

On the Snowy, on the Darling, on the Downs and 'round the world

The story of this man is told here still.

How his love confronts and challenges and sets our minds a'whirl

With possibilities, and calls to shape our will.

So choose that path more difficult, not seeking control and power

Seeking love, embrace and welcome as our way,

Whenever we meet a stranger, through a song or through a flower

And through our celebration here this day.

**Paul Mitchell.**